

ISSUE AREAS

Neighborhood Commercial

Existing Commercial Areas

The majority of commercial development in Cluster 10 is in a strip commercial format – in other words, a relatively shallow strip of land (about 100 feet in depth) along major street frontages. Existing zoning reinforces this pattern of commercial development and may not allow the flexibility in site size and configuration needed to be successful in attracting large scale neighborhood commercial reinvestments.

Although the results of the neighborhood commercial building condition survey suggest that much of the commercial strip development in Cluster 10 is stable and economically viable, some areas are showing advanced signs of decline and major deterioration. (It is important to remember that the map illustrating the results of the neighborhood commercial building condition survey includes all non-residential street frontages, not just retail/commercial uses.) Not all of these declining commercial strips will recover as viable commercial areas. As a result, choices on commercial reinvestment priorities must be made in order to establish a framework to coordinate public, private and non-profit reinvestment efforts. In setting these priorities, it will be helpful to consider the condition/viability of existing commercial areas within the Cluster, the socio-economic characteristics of Cluster census tracts, the location of recent and planned commercial projects within and adjacent to Cluster 10 and the location and nature of "competing" commercial development/retail centers within 1-3 miles of the Cluster. In addition, re-use strategies must be defined for those commercial strip segments which are not viable and will not become neighborhood commercial reinvestment target areas for the next 5 - 10 years.

Planned Neighborhood Commercial Developments

Two major commercial developments are planned or proposed in Cluster 10:

- Expansion of the Livernois Square shopping center located on Livernois, south of 7 Mile (complete)
- The development of a major new retail center (over 150,000 SF), anchored by a Super Kmart, on the Grace Hospital site located at 7 Mile and Meyers

Although the Kmart project has received zoning approval from the City, it received mixed reviews from the community because of the size of the development relative to the size of the site and the site's location, adjacent to residential uses. For many stakeholders, this project highlights the need for early and widespread dissemination of information on proposed major development projects.

Focus Group and IGI Highlights

Cluster 10 stakeholders identified high median income and availability of vacant commercial space as major assets in attracting neighborhood commercial reinvestment. The lack of parking and the poor image created by vacant and unmaintained business on major street frontages were identified as the greatest barriers.

Many Cluster stakeholders frequently patronize area personal service establishments and some frequently patronize local grocery stores, but almost all IGI respondents indicated that they shop most frequently outside the City of Detroit for clothing, household goods, business services and entertainment. Stakeholders found that the quality and variety of goods offered inside the Cluster were generally not up to their standards. As a result, much of the Cluster's buying power is being used outside the Cluster and outside the City of Detroit. The goods/services which stakeholders identified as most essential to quality of life in their Cluster included grocery stores (including small, quality specialty markets), restaurants/entertainment/recreation and hardware/home repair.

The locations which stakeholders identified as having the greatest potential for retail reinvestment include:

- Livernois and 7 Mile - small/neighborhood scale commercial
- Wyoming and 7 Mile - small/neighborhood scale commercial
- Fenkell and Livernois - medium/cluster-scale commercial

While stakeholders recognized that there were diverse incomes and needs within the Cluster, and that neighborhood commercial should be balanced in terms of distribution and the markets served, there was a strong preference for smaller scale, entrepreneurial business (targeted to meet the special needs of the Cluster) over large scale, national chain/discount operators.

Stakeholders also expressed a preference for a scale of commercial development that would maintain the area's strong residential character, rather than threatening it. While this smaller scale, incremental commercial reinvestment may be more work to recruit, track, coordinate and manage, it may also be the best "fit" for the shallow depth strip commercial zoning that characterizes the Cluster and the desire to maintain a strong residential character. There also seemed to be a strong interest in exploring a mixed use development approach – from the idea of apartment living above ground level commercial uses to the idea of providing higher density residential uses (low-rise apartments and townhouses) as a transition between larger scale commercial development and single family uses.

Stakeholders also suggested establishing a cluster-based business development organization which could:

- Document the buying power/unmet market potential represented by the Cluster in order to recruit investors
- Work more effectively with the City to obtain help in land assembly, providing development incentives and reducing red tape
- Provide Cluster stakeholders a continuing voice in the location, scale and design of commercial developments

Housing

Existing Housing Conditions

While the majority of the housing in Cluster 10 is in stable condition, the results of the housing condition survey show that there are some areas beginning to show signs of decline and some areas of advanced decline and major deterioration. The areas showing early signs of decline, which are likely candidates for paint-up/fix-up campaigns, repair and rehab loan programs and efforts to strengthen neighborhood organizations, include:

- Several areas along the northern boundary of the Cluster
- Portions of the Martin Park and Pilgrim Village areas
- The neighborhoods south of the Lodge

Areas where advanced signs of decline and severe deterioration are evident include:

- Portions of the Pilgrim Village area (north of the Lodge)
- The area surrounding Focus Hope (south of Fenkell and east of Linwood)

Major Housing Developments

Major housing developments underway in Cluster 10 include:

- A 75-unit senior housing project adjacent to the Northwest Activity Center
- The 22-unit, mixed-income Pilgrim Village Apartments on Puritan east of Livernois

Focus Group and IGI Highlights

Most Cluster 10 stakeholders feel the quality of housing in the Cluster is good or excellent, although people are somewhat divided on whether things are getting better or worse.

Stakeholders identified the following characteristics as most important to neighborhood quality of life:

- Good schools and recreation
- Quality commercial areas
- Good property maintenance

Stakeholders expressed a strong preference for maintaining the majority of the Cluster's housing stock as for sale/owner occupied. (About 69% is owner occupied today.) However, stakeholders also felt that it was appropriate to provide a range of housing choice within the Cluster to allow different life style stages to be accommodated – from senior housing, to first time home buyer, to renter. Stakeholders felt that it was essential to provide this expanded range of housing opportunities in a way that would not threaten the integrity of stable, intact neighborhoods.

Stakeholders also suggested that the preferred pricing mix for new housing development in Cluster 10 should include:

- 60% or more priced for middle income households (sale prices of \$90,000 – 150,000)
- 25% – 40% priced for low and moderate income households (sale prices of \$60,000 – 89,000)
- 25% for upper income households (sale prices of \$150,000 or more)

Although Cluster 10 stakeholders felt that the lack of appropriately sized parcels of vacant land would preclude large scale housing redevelopment, they did identify preliminary housing reinvestment target areas for three categories of housing improvement.

Paint Up/Fix up

- The area between Livernois and Wyoming north of Pembroke
- The Martin Park area

Rehab and Infill

- Pilgrim Village
- Palmer Park apartment area
- The area south of the Lodge and north of Oakman
- The area between Wyoming and Livernois north of Pembroke

New multifamily

- Within the Pilgrim Village area

It may also be appropriate to consider multifamily residential development as a "new" use for those portions of commercial strips which are not areas of strength and which will not be a focus for retail investment in the next 5 - 10 years.

Job Centers

Existing Job Statistics

In 1994, it was estimated that there were about 7,800 jobs in Cluster 10 which represented about 2 - 2.5 % of the total jobs in the City. The majority of those jobs (51%) were in the services sector, while 18% were in retail trade, 15% in manufacturing, 7% each in wholesale trade and public administration and about 1% each in transportation/communications/utilities and in finance/insurance/real estate. For the most part, these jobs are located at the Cluster's existing institutions, in existing commercial areas and in the manufacturing area located on the southern boundary of the Cluster.

Major Job-related Development

Significant job-related development projects planned or underway in Cluster 10 include:

- Focus Hope's 2-story classroom addition, as well as the longer term possibility of expansion north to the Lodge east of Linwood.
- University of Detroit High School classrooms and cafeteria

Focus Group and IGI Highlights

Stakeholders identified the following as the types of jobs the Cluster needs more of:

1. Manufacturing
2. Skilled trades and technology related jobs

3. Education, including expanded capacity to provide job skills training, daycare providers and mentors
4. Retail/commercial

Stakeholders seemed to want to concentrate efforts on attracting better paying manufacturing and technology jobs rather than entry level retail/commercial jobs. Nevertheless, it is important to think about retail/commercial jobs as entrepreneurial opportunities and as a young person's first step on an "employment ladder – not just as dead end jobs with low pay scales.

Given the predominantly residential character of the Cluster, it is also important to recognize that there are not many areas where manufacturing, skilled trades and technology-related jobs can be located without causing conflicts with existing, stable neighborhoods. As a result, with the exception of the Focus Hope area and the adjacent industrial zone along the rail line, the scale of proposed new non-retail job centers in Cluster 10 may be relatively modest. Stakeholders identified the University of Detroit Mercy and Focus Hope as assets on which to build in determining where new non-retail/non-service jobs might be located.

Stakeholders identified the greatest barriers to job-related reinvestment to be:

- Perception of crime
- Lack of City services
- Deteriorating retail areas
- Lack of available, suitably located land

In considering incentives or initiatives which might have an impact in attracting job-related reinvestment, stakeholders suggested the idea of establishing a Cluster-based business development organization that could work with the City to help assemble land, cut red tape and streamline development approvals; facilitate access to financing; market the Cluster to potential employers; and ensure that stakeholders have a voice in development decisions that impact their Cluster.

Stakeholders identified a number of job training programs available in Cluster 10 to meet the needs of both youth and adults (for example, Focus Hope, Lewis College of Business, University of Detroit Mercy). Stakeholders seemed to feel that the available programs were

generally effective, but that a wider range of program options were needed. In particular, stakeholders felt that training opportunities needed to be better targeted to real business needs and job opportunities and that computer and technology training should be given high priority.

Transportation

Expressways and Major Streets

Cluster 10 is bordered by the Lodge on the west and is less than a mile from I-96 (to the southwest along Davison) and from I-75 (to the east of Woodward). As a result, regional access to Cluster 10 is quite good.

Major north-south streets include Woodward, Livernois, and Wyoming. Major east-west streets include McNichols, 7 Mile and 8 Mile.

Rail

A rail line through the southern portion of the Cluster (just north of Oakman Boulevard) has served as the focus of an industrial corridor extending west into the Lyndon Road industrial area and east into Highland Park. It is reported that this rail line is now used by only two trains a week.

Transportation Investments

No major capital improvement projects are proposed in Cluster 10, although some street repavings are scheduled.

Access to Automobiles

Household access to automobiles is very high in Cluster 10. While in many census tracts in the city, 25-35% of the households have no regular access to an automobile, in Cluster 10 there is no a tract where less than 90% of the households have a car. Seventeen percent of all households in Cluster 10 have no access to an automobile.

Transit

Buses operate on all of Cluster 10's major north-south and east-west streets, as well as on Schaefer, Dexter and Linwood. D-DOT/SMART transfer points are located on Woodward Avenue; in addition, buses on James Couzens, Greenfield, Schaefer and 7 Mile operate beyond the City limits.

Focus Group and IGI Highlights

Although more stakeholders felt that the condition of roads in the Cluster was bad than good, transportation-related investments other than road repaving were identified as having the highest priority in Cluster 10:

- More parking
- Establish a bus system serving Cluster 10
- Define preferred truck routes
- Enforce parking regulations and ordinances

Nevertheless, decisions will also be needed concerning the types of roadway improvements that should be given priority – from repaving, to streetscape and/or traffic calming improvements – and how those infrastructure investments can best be coordinated with private and non-profit investments in housing, neighborhood commercial and job centers.

While there are segments of the Cluster population who rely on public transit, no focus group participants reported using public transit frequently. As a result, the priority which should be given to transit-related investments, as opposed to other types of transportation improvements, requires additional investigation.

When asked to identify transportation issues other than road condition and transit that were important in Cluster 10, stakeholders cited the cost and availability of automobile insurance as, by far, the most important issue.

Environment

Parks and Recreation

In discussing parks and recreation, stakeholders generally felt that the quality, amount and distribution of parks and recreation facilities were inadequate in Cluster 10. Stakeholders also believed that cooperation between the City and Detroit Public Schools would allow the more efficient utilization of funding resources and physical facilities with the result of improving both the distribution and quality of park and recreation opportunities throughout the Cluster.

Environmental Issues

Cluster 10 has several contaminated sites.

Act 307 Sites

- Enterprise Oil, 14445 Linwood (south of Lodge). Petroleum bulk station; waste oil contamination
- Tronex Chemical Corp., 2575 Fenkell (south of Lodge). Chemical product manufacture
- Total Service Station, 13001 8 Mile
- Saran Building, 1340 Oakman (demolished)

CERCLA Superfund Sites 1997

- BASF Corporation. 3301 Bourke Avenue

Nevertheless, stakeholders generally felt that the cumulative impact of overgrown vacant lots, illegal dumping, abandoned cars and trash in general had a more significant impact on the Cluster's quality of life.

Youth Development Focus Group and IGI Highlights

Stakeholders identified the greatest needs related to youth development to be:

- Mentoring and positive adult role models
- More and better organized programs to develop social and job skills as well as to expand horizons through cultural appreciation
- More block club level activities addressing youth needs and problems
- Quality early childhood development programs and child care
- More recreation facilities and an expanded range of recreation programs that go beyond traditional sports activities

Stakeholders also identified the greatest barriers to youth development as:

- Policies that limit the use of recreational facilities
- Poverty
- Unskilled parents

Stakeholders identified the large number of families within the Cluster who send their children to private schools – and the resulting lack of parental/stakeholder involvement in the public schools – as a significant youth development issue. Stakeholders felt that this issue should be addressed because the quality of the public schools is of critical importance in ensuring that young people can succeed in life and, as a result, school quality is critical in attracting and retaining residents who have the mobility to choose where they will live. The question which stakeholders posed was how can the Cluster mobilize the energy and talents of its stakeholders to improve and enrich area public schools?

On the topic of youth-oriented job training and placement, stakeholders named a number of programs which are available in the Cluster and rated those available programs as generally effective. Nevertheless, stakeholders agreed that a wider range of program options was needed. In addition, stakeholders suggested that special

attention be focused on removing barriers to participation in available programs including, for example, lack of information and program outreach, lack of reliable transportation and lack of affordable day care.

As noted above (see Environment), stakeholders generally felt that the number, distribution and quality of available recreation facilities fell short of their expectations. They also felt that the hours of facility availability and the range of programs provided needed to be expanded. Finally stakeholders suggested that the public schools and the City work cooperatively to better utilize school sites for recreation and to improve the geographic distribution of recreation facilities and programs throughout the Cluster.